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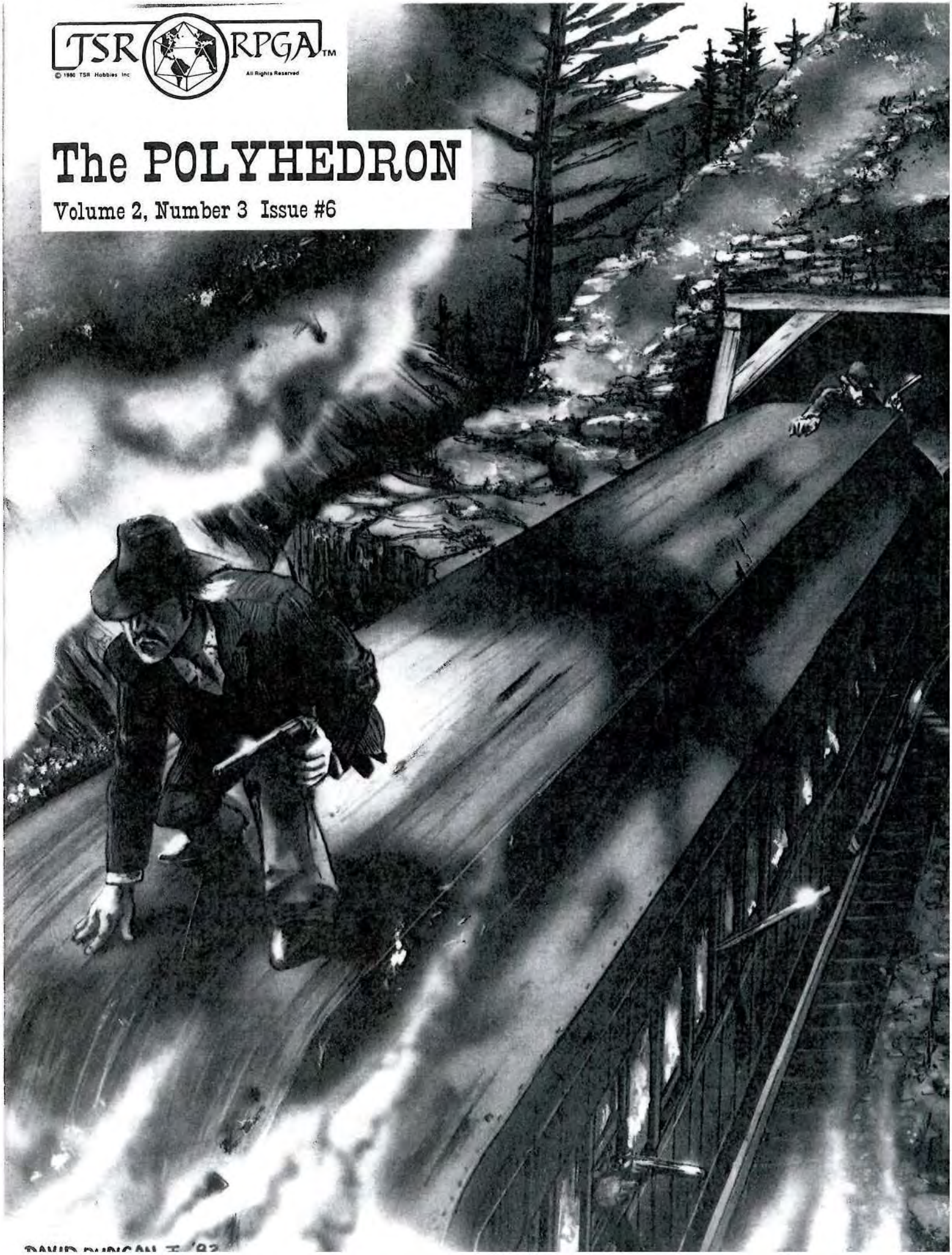
The POLYHEDRON

Volume 2, Number 3 Issue #6



The POLYHEDRON

Volume 2, Number 3

Issue #6

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Roll for surprise -

Not much room here, and not much time to talk... so write to us! Tell us what you'd like to see, so we can give it to you.

We're busy getting ready for conventions, so I've gotta run (still writing modules...); see you there!

Frank Mentzer

LETTERS

Letters to the editor may be sent to **The POLYHEDRON**, *POB 509, Lake Geneva, WI 53147*

"A local religious group is trying to ban DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games from our school and library. Can you help?"

— JQ, Georgia

This has happened occasionally. The biggest problem is that some folks feel that what THEY believe in should be applied to everyone else — "for their own good." Many of them refuse to even look at the game, but condemn it as spreading "demonology." This is a flat-out LIE; we do NOT advocate the "Occult" in any way; it's a superstitious hangover from the Dark Ages, before we discovered Modern Science. Magic and Fantasy Adventures make nice topics for a game, however — and that's ALL the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Games are.

If you want help with these sort of problems, write to us. We'd like to hear about it. Address all such letters to TSR Hobbies, Inc. (POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147), with "Attention: Duke" on the envelope.

While you're waiting for the mail, we've found that most of the criticism comes from folks who have only heard rumors. It might help to invite them to watch a game, so they can see for themselves —right there on the spot — what the game is REALLY about.

"Is the RPGA Network the same as the UK's D&D™ Players Association?"

— JT, Derbyshire, England

NO. They are an independent organization, which is an affiliate of the RPGA Network. Their members therefore receive full reciprocal rights, however — which means that a member in good standing of THEIR organization who visits the USA can do everything an RPGA Network member can do (except receive The POLYHEDRON; to get that mailed to you, you've got to be an RPGA Member).

"Do you make a carrying case of some sort, or know of any other company that makes cases for lead figures?"

— JR, Illinois

We have a few of ours left; see the Gift Catalog for details. However, we're almost out, and can't afford to get more until we get lots more members to buy them.

Where I'm Coming From

Heads up for a membership drive. We're working on the details for a year-long push that will end up with every recruiter getting a little something, and the best recruiters getting a free trip to Wisconsin for the biggest and best game convention in history. That'll be coming up in 1983; more details on the Drive will be announced at East, in June.

It's been asked occasionally just why the various game manufacturers don't get along. It's implied that we should all get together and do things for the sake of the hobby. Well, that's all very nice, and we DO care about and do things for the hobby; we just don't all get along like family. Face it: each and every game manufacturer is looking for YOUR dollars, which will go into the business along with many other dollars. And you've only got so much to spend, and if you give it to Company A, then Company B doesn't get that income. It's a business; DON'T expect competing companies to smile and cooperate unless it benefits THEM.

You ask why we don't push non-TSR role playing games, like the TRAVELLER system? For one thing, TSR created the RPGA™ Network with their money and services. TSR makes more role playing games than anyone else, and they're better games, on the whole. Read the paragraph above this one, and you'll see why pushing non-TSR games isn't what we want to do right now. Now, remember, I'm not saying that TSR games are perfect; that would just be silly. There are always some errors, glitches that occur during production, and so forth. But they *are* better, and there are more TSR role playing games than anybody else's, and TSR started this show... so when TSR doesn't mind covering the other games along with the biggies, then we'll expand our coverage to include some.

NOTE that if enough members write in and ask for coverage of a specific role playing game, we WILL cover what's desired. But there haven't been many requests for other games. If you want something, we'll try to comply, but we have to serve the most members, and must therefore pass over some games. It's going to be tough finding space for new stuff anyway; have you noticed how packed these newsletters are, even without advertising?

Come to think of it, the way TSR is expanding, we might be able to cover all the games you want — as TSR games! You've probably heard already, but SPI (Simulations Publications, Inc.) has been acquired by the TSR corporation. The DRAGONQUEST system is now a TSR product... we should be covering it in the future. Stay tuned for more info on how the SPI business will affect our coverage in this newsletter.

A word to the wise: if you don't keep up your studies (or whatever) because you're playing a lot of games, you could be in for trouble. Try and keep things in perspective: these are just games, made for your amusement and entertainment. There are many other things that are MUCH more important in the long run; *don't do anything you'll regret later.* (Someone in the back groan about "The Fatherly Bit?" Well, I mean what I say, bub, and if you've got your act together you'll keep your eyes open and not get carried away by some Fantasy game.)

Sorry for the ranting, but I've seen folks get hung up on lots of various things (including games), and they always wish (later on) that they'd wised up earlier. But wishes don't work in our world...

Looking forward to talking with you at the Members' Meetings at the cons; last year's chats were wild, productive, constructive, and fun all around. You say you don't go to big cons? Too expensive? They keep the costs as low as they can, in most cases; the GEN CON® XV Game Convention costs $12 for 4 days, plus about $1 per event. Not so bad, is it?

Gotta run. Later!

ADMINISTRATORS: If you are interested in becoming an Official TOP SECRET® game Administrator, write to us for an Admin Questionaire. Similar to the AD&D™ Questionaire, this self-test will give us an idea of your knowledge and experience with the TOP SECRET rule system. We'll be running RPGA ™ tournaments of TOP SECRET games soon, and the standard RPGA Game Master Benefit applies: a free one-year membership extension for each round run!

DRAGON™ Magazine: If you've purchased a subscription at the RPGA Network discount rate, remember that you *can't* renew it for the same discount. This is an introductory offer that you can only get *once*. Renewals are handled by Dragon Publishing, and they'll send you a notice automatically.

GIFT CATALOG: We've got RPGA Network Belt Buckles! We've got caps and T-shirts! We've got buttons with LOTS of things on them — like "Official Dungeon Master" for the conventions. Watch for details ...

GOLD SEALS: Charter Members recently received a "thank you" from us, for helping out at the very start: embossed gold stick-on seals. One should be placed on your Certificate of Membership, to indicate your status. A listing of the Charter Members started last issue, and finishes in this one; if you're listed but *haven't* received a seal, please let us know.

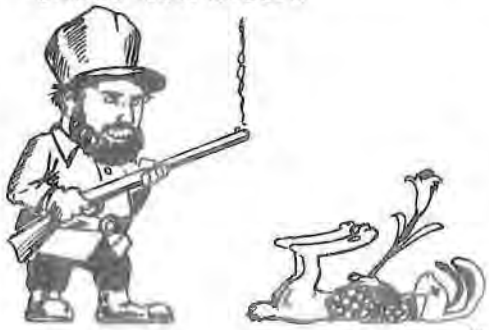
If you would like more Charter Member seals, you may purchase them for $1.00 each (postage included). There is a limit of 2 per member, and you *can't* get any unless you're a Charter Member.

MONEY: A quick reminder for Members who don't use American money: all payments received here *must* be in American funds. Check your local bank or post office for the conversion rates, and buy a Money Order in USA dollars. It'll save lots of problems, for you and for us.

BINGO! The newsletters are now coming out on time. The modules are in production. We made it!

You can expect any given tournament module to be out in print a year (or less) after it's used as an RPGA™ tournament module. So we'll see you at the GEN CON® XV Game Convention, where you can purchase the epic "Egg of the Phoenix" (R-3) and its sequel "Doc's Island" (R-4). They were the modules used in last year's RPGA tournament.

Boy, I've been looking forward to this... *SHOOT THAT RABBIT!*



RPGA INTERVIEW WITH ...

"JAKE" JAQUET

And now, the conclusion to our three-part interview with DRAGON™ magazine publisher, Gary Lee "Jake" Jaquet.

HQ: Were there any notable decisions you had to make along the way, in steering Dragon Publishing or DRAGON™ magazine towards what you wanted?

JJ: Yeah; obviously there are decisions made every day. Some have more immediate impact than others, and some have more impact down the road.

I made the decision to try to put as much revenue as possible back into the magazine to develop it even further. This is the opposite of what's called Profit Taking; it's Profit Investment. We took that money and, rather than giving it out as raises to the staff or expanding the facilities, sank it back into acquiring more expensive artwork. I don't necessarily want to say better, but more expensive, because the name of the artist also costs. We put it back into increasing the size of the magazine, into the quality of the materials, and just, overall, spent more money to make the magazine physically better. We did this to increase the circulation, because whenever you print something, more is cheaper, and therefore you're making profit, and you can afford nice art, quality paper, and those sort of things. It was a big decision to make at that time, because it changed us more rapidly into a large magazine than if we had stayed the same and just said "we'll take the profit."

Another big decision was to go with the 1981 calendar. We actually started contracting for the art in the spring of 1980; it was a sizeable investment. "Do we expand the size of the magazine some more, or do we come out with another product?" As it turned out, that was quite successful. Last year about this time I made a decision to go ahead and commit to the 1983 Tim Hildebrandt calendar, which Dragon Publishing will be offering for sale this fall.

These were big decisions because they involved business matters, finances and stuff like that. Other decisions, though, were a little less tangible; for example, about the magazine's style or personality, which were not made solely by myself. To a great degree they're made by the Editor, Kim Mohan. He's quite capable, both in technically editing copy and working with words, and also in giving a style to the magazine through the selection of articles and so forth. His style has been quite accepted by the readership, but he could just as easily change it tomorrow. Using lots of white space and big headlines, for example; being very artsy.

In that respect, we've kept DRAGON™ magazine's style more conservative. The reader is using it as a doctor might read a medical journal: getting information, facts, people's opinions... There's art, but we're not becoming a supermarket magazine that has four inch headlines. So these are decisions that are ongoing; I can't say that they're major ones by themselves, but with all the others made they amount to a major decision: the style of DRAGON™ magazine.

Probably the most noted decision that I've made around here was to drop the word "The" from the title of THE DRAGON® magazine. "THE DRAGON," two words, is a registered trademark owned by TSR Hobbies, because that was the name for along time. That means no one else can come out with a magazine called "THE DRAGON" magazine. The publication trademark for DRAGON™ magazine has been applied for, which is why we put a "TM" as opposed to the "Circle-R" and that's your Trademark 101 lesson for the day. So anyway, we dropped the "THE," because it was difficult to say "Do you have 'THE DRAGON' magazine?" People would shorten it automatically and say "Do you have this month's DRAGON Magazine?" So it was just a matter of convenience. But boy, did we get calls. People wanted to know WHY it had gone, WHERE it had gone, WHO decided it. WHAT did it mean, everything else. Just as they did when we changed the official logo of the name from the artsy style it used to be.

Readers who have seen older copies will remember that we had this logo that said "THE DRAGON" made of letters formed by creatures, mainly snakes. We went to today's very blocky style of lettering for a commercial reason: the old style was hard to read from more than four feet away. On a newspaper or magazine rack, with five other magazines all competing for the same person's eye, we want something that's immediately readable and simple. So we went to the style that we have now for simple business reasons. A lot of people didn't like that; they liked the old script, as did I. But if you look at major magazines on the news stands today, you'll find they have very simple easy-to-identify titles and type faces.

Major decisions have mostly been financial; a few to the style of the magazine and a few to the actual physical appearance. Actually the biggest decision I've made is not to make too many decisions! Every day we decide what the magazine's going to be like, by accepting or rejecting manuscripts or artwork. What people send us, since we are almost entirely a freelance created magazine, determines what the magazine is like and how well it's received.

HQ: Strictly as a gamer, and not as a TSR employee, do you think that the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® or ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game (whichever you prefer) is a better fantasy role playing system than any other available?

JJ: It's a difficult question to answer on a strictly objective level, because of my association with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game from its beginning, and also because it was in existence before anything else.

First of all, I find it more appealing than others simply because it WAS first, because it carries the concepts down to the wording of the thing (although it's been rewritten several

times now) that puts it above the other fantasy role playing games. They're trying to say the same things without using exactly the same words, since the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game was out first, all the meaningful game terms were used. It's the flavor of the rules that appeals to me first, more so than the others.

I like the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games lots better than some, and just mildly better than others. There are some other good systems out there. I like it better in some respects because it does NOT attempt to say "This is a way to handle every circumstance in a realistic fashion." It does NOT attempt to say, "There are no arbitrary rules to make the game playable in this system." This is what I hear from so many of the other systems, in both the wording of their rules and in their advertising.

The one thing we see more often than not, in comparing role playing systems, is "This one is more real; this one simulates reality better," blah, blah, blah. Well, how can you more realistically simulate the casting of a fireball? It's fantasy, you have to imagine it. Someone may say, "Well, the D&D® game system uses the Vancean system to simulate magic, whereas this system uses the Johnson-Whitfield system of magic, and Johnson-Whitfield is obviously a far more realistic way for magic to work, because it involves the temporal energies flowing from six planes," and blah, blah, blah. Well, BUNK. I mean, fantasy is fantasy; the fireball is either cast, or it's not. And if it's your bag to have that rationalization behind it, if it somehow makes you feel better and more secure, or if somehow things are more playable or more enjoyable in the game, well that's fine, go ahead and play that way. But I really see no need for it. The D&D game system says a fireball works. In game terms, it has this effect, and that's all I need.

The D&D game rules say, basically, "This is a game, and it operates in this fashion." They admit that some of the mechanics in it are arbitrary, placed there to make the game work. Now, it may not be realistic to assume that a giant 30 feet tall exists. I've seen lots of scholarly works saying, "Well, a creature this large can't exist, because its muscles and flesh and blood would crack..." well, okay, maybe it would. I'm not too concerned about that. If a 30 foot giant makes the game playable, that's what I require from the game, and that's what makes the game enjoyable.

I consider one game better than another because of playability and enjoyability. If I were doing a comparison of every game ever put out, I would have an "Enjoyability over Playability" quotient that I would rank them all by. Obviously you have to make some distinction; you can't compare OTHELLO against the TRAVELLER system, for instance.

There's another system for fantasy role playing that has characteristics in such detail that you wouldn't believe it. Maybe D&D® game characteristics are a little arbitrary, to place a person's entire persona into 6 different characteristics, but how is having 57 characteristics any different? If we're going to try and simulate reality, we're going to have to carry that out to a couple of million different characteristics, and EVEN THEN it'll still only be a close simulation. It won't be real, because a human personality is infinite in its variability. But, okay, it's arbitrary, and if you, as a gamer, can't function without having a lot more detail in the game to make it more enjoyable for you —

HQ: Appearance, to add a simple one?

JJ: Right, right, exactly — then you can't enjoy D&D® and AD&D™ games more than some other systems which claim to be more real, or more detailed, or whatever.

HQ: You're saying D&D *and* AD&D games; do you have a preference between the two, strictly personally?

JJ: Personally I like D&D game rules better than the AD&D game system. The AD&D system is sort of a concession to people that find the D&D system a little too free-form. But it's not really a concession, because it was an evolution; it's distinctly different from the D&D game rules. In D&D games, I don't have to worry about being constrained by an author's point or rule or chart, about making a judgement as a referee, or player within the D&D system. When I run a D&D game, the stuff I've put into the game myself is in my head. In an AD&D game, though, I can be called upon by the player and just pull out the DMG, and say "Right here on page 157 it says you can't do that"; yet in D&D games you CAN do that, because that rule doesn't exist. I mean, there's nothing that substitutes, or that's different, it's just that it doesn't exist; it's up to the DM to make that determination.

HQ: Doesn't the D&D game therefore require more record keeping for consistency on the part of the dungeon master, so that when he rules one way, in a particular instance, he should make a note of it, so that he can rule the same way later?

JJ: One would suppose so, and I suppose a D&D Dungeon Master who's been playing for years will have the equivalent of the AD&D system in terms of bulk, in terms of rules that have been written down. However, it won't be the AD&D system itself; it'll be the D&D system as interpreted by — whomever.

HQ: Do you have any changes that you would make if you were given the task of redesigning the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® or ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games?

JJ: Changes in the rules, mechanics, or something?

HQ: Anything you don't like: holes, crinkles, or wrinkles.

JJ: No, there's really not much at all that I don't like in the system. Well, I can think of specifics, but they don't relate to anything that I could change. I don't like, for example, some of the terminology, but some of the terminology is necessary; the terms that I would find more preferable are already copyrighted by someone else, or whatever, so they're not changes that I would be free to make. But basically I find it a very together system, a very enjoyable system, and I would see no reason to change anything.

I might add some things that I've run across in the course of play, but not change things. Additions would be minor, like some method of handling a particular situation that's come up more often, or something that would make the game a little more playable, but not something that a competent DM couldn't handle on his own anyway once he's familiar with the game.

HQ: I've found, though, personally, that once a good thorough knowledge of the AD&D™ rules system is remembered, there is actually far LESS record keeping necessary on the part of the DM, because the rules are there, and I can quite literally run a game on the spot with no prior preparation or forethought!

JJ: Well, yes; that's the other side of the coin that makes the AD&D game system the one that they play. It just requires that initial acceptance of the bulk of material which, for those of us who grew up with the original D&D® game system, is such a difficult step to take. Someone who came on later in the evolution of the D&D system accepts it more willingly, and perhaps a person

who has never used the original D&D rules may pick up all the hardbacks and read through them and say, "Well, I think I can handle it," and try it. Maybe he feels no problem with it at all; it's sheer laziness on my part, I think.

HQ: Since there are more players of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games than of ADVANCED D&D® games, and due to the points you've just brought out, do you think the AD&D Open Tournament should retire, or shrink, or branch off and create a D&D Open Tournament for more popularity?

JJ: No. I think the AD&D system is the best set of rules to use for a fantasy role playing game tournament, simply because they are very standard, very structured, and allow the same game to be played no matter what the circumstances, the location, or the DM, which are the variables that can affect the tournament the most. Certainly there are more players, but I think that they would prefer AD&D games to D&D games, in tournaments. I think that a lot of D&D fans play for recreation, as a non-serious one-shot type of game, than an ongoing campaign; I think that would tend to be more in the AD&D game category, but that's just an educated guess on my part.

HQ: That's the general consensus. Well, what's in the future for Dragon Publishing?

JJ: In the near future, DRAGON™ magazine will remain essentially as it is. I doubt that it will get much larger in size, probably staying in the eighty to a hundred pages range. And we'll continue to put out the Best of DRAGON™ reprints. A lot of the things that have been said are very basic, and once we've said them, we've said them. The magazine has covered a lot of the meaty area, and now we're concentrating on the fringes, the little holes and chinks and things that need to be resolved and discussed. I'm not sure, at this point, how that's going to affect the evolution of the magazine. We may go in cycles, coming out with the things from five years ago or variations on them, because the people that read it back then have left gaming, or whatever, or wouldn't mind hearing it again.

Another game could catch on; let's say for example that the STAR FRONTIERS™ game comes out with a great following, akin to that of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. There could be a magazine devoted to science fiction gaming, particularly the STAR FRONTIERS game and possibly covering TRAVELLER games and so forth, to the extent that we do in DRAGON™ magazine now, and make DRAGON magazine more strictly fantasy role playing. We could toss the GAMMA WORLD™ game from magazine to magazine, depending on which way you wanted to consider it. But outside of just game magazine publishing, we're thinking in terms of other publishing products —

HQ: Greeting cards, for instance?

JJ: Greeting cards, stationery, fantasy art posters, just about anything that can be printed that might be of interest. To that end, if someone submits a novel that we as professional journalists consider to have possibilities, there's nothing that says that we can't come out with a paperback book that, y'know, happens to be romantic fiction set in the 1880s, or whatever it might be, if we determine it to be a commercially successful product. And the long range plan for Dragon Publishing will be to become a true publishing house, having its roots in gaming, serving the people that are gamers, but also branching out and getting into all the areas of publishing, from paperbacks to posters.

HQ: We'd like to hear your opinions on computers and electronic games, and how they may affect the gaming hobby.

JJ: Well, in the next two years, computers will have a tremendous impact on games and gaming. They have already shown a significant impact, and assuming that the trends continue along the way they have, they'll become an integral part of the hobby within five years.

I just read an article by a science fiction author who's come out with a program based on a plot line. It allows you to play a fantasy adventure much as any adventure program would, but like reading a novel with significant differences each time. He says that it's the equivalent of a 30,000 word novel, and I'm anxiously awaiting a copy of the program to check it out myself. You may find many "name" science fiction and fantasy writers doing stories in the future that can also be played in game form.

These days, there are usually electronic games in theater lobbies. It's a little hard to play a board game while you're waiting for the movie to start, but it's not difficult at all to play a video game if there's a machine there.

HQ: There are even video games in the grocery and local convenience stores, and things like that. You mentioned home computers, and an interest in picking up a certain program. Do you own a home computer?

JJ: Not at the present time, although of course here in the office I have access to the company computer, which is a huge thing, and I can even write my own program on it if I so desire. Within the company we have our Computer Games department, and I have access to that. However, my next major purchase will probably be a home computer with disc drive, so that I can have that aspect of gaming in my home. I don't see how I can avoid it!

HQ: The growing field of Computer Gaming would seem to fit DRAGON™ magazine philosophy, as a new game form. Do you plan to expand?

JJ: Yes, indeed. Our first computer column, "The Electric Eye," was geared mainly at exposing people to the terminology and technology of computers, and their application to gaming in particular. Now we'd like to report on computers and computer programs on the market that could be of interest to gamers. We could even start to provide some programs in the magazine itself. This hasn't been done to date because of the expertise that's necessary which we don't have on our staff, but which is now available within TSR as a whole. Hopefully we'll be able to tap into that source.

It's also been a matter of time, too, in waiting for the audience to exist out there that will want to have this sort of information. Two years ago very few people had home computers, but now they're quite prolific, so now is a better time to think about that sort of a column.

HQ: Well, what's ahead for "Jake" Jaquet?

JJ: Well, within the TSR organization I'm quite content with my position, that of being in charge of the publishing arm of the company.

We're looking at putting out a United Kingdom edition of DRAGON™ magazine in the near future. It will be produced and distributed in England by TSR UK, Ltd., but will be within the purview of Dragon Publishing. It's just a matter of time before we expand to be worldwide, and I'll be quite interested to see what happens there. So my position has a lot of interesting things to come.

It was one thing to be a gamer, and work on a newspaper or a newsletter, and it's quite another thing to be a publisher of a gaming magazine. For me, the future is growing with Dragon Publishing.

HQ: Anything you'd like to do that you haven't had a chance to?

JJ: Well, professionally I've pretty much got the world by the tail. I can't think of any other position, short of running something physically larger, that I'd prefer. Personally, I'd like to have some time to actually play games! One of the problems with a job that involves a subject that you like is that you spend so much time doing the business functions associated with it that you either don't have the time to actually sit down and play, or if you do, you're so fed up with the subject that it's the old "busman's holiday." Y'know, you'd rather go out and play a game of football, or *anything* rather than sit down and stare at more cardboard counters or tap on a computer console. But yeah, to have the time to game and enjoy the game for the game's sake would be a personal goal.

HQ: Okay! Well, thank you, Gary L. Jaquet.

NOTES FOR THE

DUNGEON MASTER

This is a somewhat philosophical look at realism and variants.

My chief objection to "realism" in *any* fantasy role playing system is the simple fact that it takes too long. Consider taking a simple one-on-one combat to a state of ultimate realism...

You determine the energy state of the individual cells along each of the muscle tissues in each portion of the entire body of each of the participants. Add the myriad of factors involving current weather and climate of the battle area, and details of the terrain; the overall "will to win" of the fighters, based on their lives so far, their current emotional and physical state; the specific condition of each individual element of their equipment, and the probabilities of ideal vs. actual performance of each element; their degree of training in the weapons *and* tactics used plus their ability to apply this information —

I could go on for pages. The point is, *how* "realistic" do you want to get — and at what price?

The AD&D™ combat system is *not* designed nor intended to simulate realistic combat. A completely realistically simulated duel would either require more knowledge than is currently available, even with all our modern knowledge of biology, history, the mind, and so forth, *or* would be an actual duel: a reenactment. We recommend that you *NOT* choose the reenactment option; medieval times and techniques were dirty, primitive, and dangerous. I'll take modern medicine, plumbing, and literature over the middle ages any day, thank you.

The AD&D™ game system WAS designed for our fun, and also with several criteria firmly in mind — including playability, entertainment value, self-consistency, and many other things. I think it's the best system in existence when ALL these factors are considered.

In the mid-seventies the first elements of the AD&D game system were coming out, and the transition between the original and advanced versions was confused. I've realized since then that they're different systems entirely. As a result, I treated the advanced system (at first) as guidelines only, and immediately decided that casting a magic missile spell for a mere 6 seconds couldn't possibly use up your actions for an entire minute. The resulting variant of multiple actions per round based on casting time plus recovery time resulted in an imbalance of the game in favor of magic-users. Other variants intended to increase realism resulted in other imbalances. It was quite a mess.

Everyone's free to make their own mistakes. Once I stopped considering the "flaws" as "obvious absurdities" and looked at (and used) the system as printed, I realized that I had fallen into the Democratic Fallacy: the attitude that my opinion was as good as anyone's. This is wrong; the opinions of experts and professionals are much more valid; this is why they command good salaries in the modern business world. The system as published is a usable, workable compromise between the various things that make a good game. I don't know how I got the idea that I could do a better design than the professionals, but I got over it.

This is *not* to say that the designs are perfect. Now that I've been in the publishing business for a while, I know that there are times when you have to compromise between doing everything the way you *want* to, as a gamer, and the financial requirements of business, legalities, and time. So when you *do* find a flaw, or an area that wasn't fully detailed, go ahead and try to work things out. But be *CAREFUL* — try to make the changes and additions fit the rest of the system.

Here are some definitions, in my own terms: a variant is a game procedure which is done differently than the procedure published in the system. EXAMPLE: the multiple-spell-per-round system I mentioned earlier; the books state that it's to be done an entirely different way.

A deduction is the fixing of a minor hole in the system which is repaired by considering the phrasing and context in which the hole appears, and applying the system's logic to fix it properly. EXAMPLE: the Area of Effect of the teleport spell says "Special"; spells which apply only to one creature say so, as "Creature Touched," "One Creature," or something similar; therefore, the caster CAN carry another person along as part or all of the specified weight carryable.

A derivative is a whole procedure that is never specified in the published game system, which must be created in detail and usually from scratch. EXAMPLE: Armor Class for horses in barding is never specified. As an unarmored horse is AC 7, I decided to award a 10% bonus per class of barding (leather, chain, plate) with the resultant armor classes of 5, 3, and 1 respectively. I'm generous.

Feel free to use any of the above in dealing with the player who complains about lack of realism.

Feel free also to play games in whatever form you want, using whatever rules you want. But I urge all of you who are using variants — procedures which are different than those given in the system — to stop and think a minute: did you give the system a chance?

If you did, then great. Fine! *GO AHEAD* and modify things you don't like; there's no law that says you have to obey the rules of an amusement form like this, and there never will be. But note that you'll be using the Official by-the-book system in any and all Official tournaments, and you better be *GOOD* at it if you expect to win.

Now that *that's* out of my system, here are two goodies from my campaign:

1. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH KIDS TODAY: Just after entering the caverns, the party hears crying from behind them. Looking around, they see a cute little girl in a polka-dot dress, her eyes red from crying. She's apparently wandered in behind them, and is lost. Ahem —it's really a vampire (created when a "normal" vampire slew one of the neighborhood kids years ago; yeah, she does look a bit pale, now that you ask) who got behind the group using gaseous form and then materialized. Her main attack is running up and grabbing someone's leg (ideally a Lawful Good), for a 2-level drain but no clawing damage...

2. SNOOP: A group of evil characters got lost in some caves, and started calling out for their deity (Set) to save them. And lo and behold, "Set" arrived, chatted a bit and changed himself into a red dragon for his own convenience, explaining that keeping his normal form would draw the attention of the other gods. Well, this "god" was really an ancient red dragon with a *polymorph self* spell, who overheard their chants while snooping around in the caves... and had himself a nice dinner.

The basic idea can be applied whenever the party gets careless with the names of deities, or abuses the intent behind divine intervention.

GAMMA WORLD ™ Game Feature

THE WEAPONS OF THE ANCIENTS

by James M. Ward

In the beginning of the Dark Years, in the giant engineering metropolis of Stelocolm, Washington, a group of designers watched their culture begin to decline into another Dark Age. With the total separation of world communications, and glimpses of biological nightmares forming in the waters of the sound nearby, the engineers decided to work towards designing devices that would defend and ward their future generations from harm.

Using the remains of the crumbling civilization, and the knowledge of their engineering computers, these men and women set about to create defensive and offensive devices more powerful than the world had ever known. They lacked, however, the technological knowledge of the workings of the Ancient's machines. One of their leaders, known as Jward, realized that the complexity and diversification of the controls on most of the designs would be completely useless in a world that had forgotten most of its past accomplishments. He and a dedicated cadre of scientists developed equipment that would function under the most severe conditions yet be easy to repair.

The equipment developed by those few engineers who were led by Jward are known and feared all over the world. Remember; they can be found anywhere with any group, and they are instantly recognized for what they are: "THE TOOLS OF JWARD."

KEY

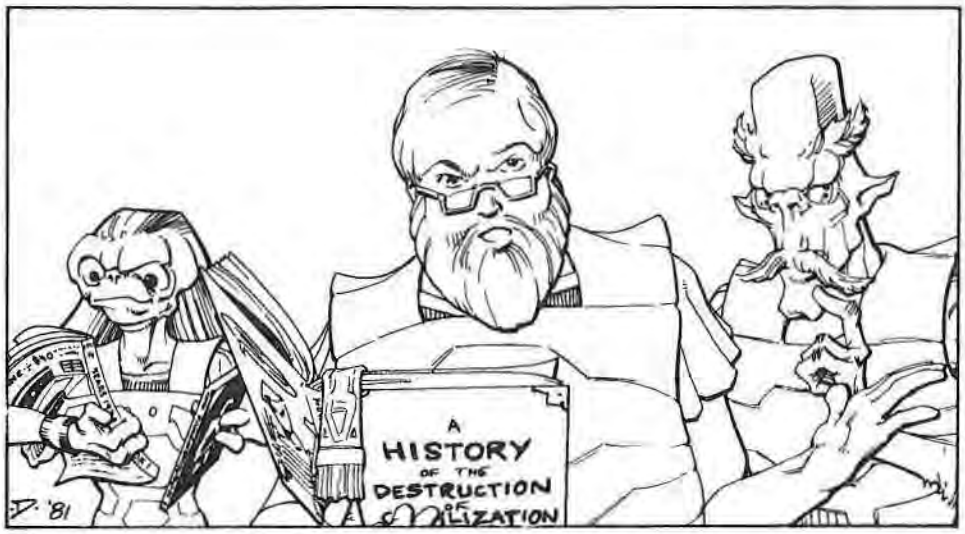
Weapon Class	**WC**
Range	**R**
Damage	**D**
Power Source	**PS**
Duration	**DR**

CRYSTAL OF HEALING

R: Touch
PS: Solar power
DR: 120 minutes per 24 hour charge

The crystal has the power to cure several different types of health related problems. It is able to completely destroy all virus infections after just 5 minutes under its rays. It is also able to heal 5 hit points of physical damage a day after ten minutes under its rays. And finally, it can purify ten gallons of water after twenty minutes of exposure to its rays.

The device is fist-sized, and has ten facets to its structure. Three different color beams are emitted for the three different functions. The intensity of the colored beam is determined by how hard the device has to work to accomplish its end.



BEAM OF THE LOCATOR

R: 10 kilometers
PS: Solar power
DR: 60 minutes per 24 hour charge

This device looks much like a compass. The holder of the Beam of The Locator chooses from three settings; powered energy cells, powered broadcast sources, and atomic power of any type. An indicator then directs the holder toward the power source. While there are many different types of devices that serve this same function, this is by far the simplest of all.

CRYSTAL OF SEEING

R: Variable

The Crystal of Seeing is a simple magnifying device that works from a rod of unbreakable crystal. While most of the other telescopic devices have been broken over the ages, these rods cannot break, and are highly valued by those who use them.

TORPOL GEMS

WC: 8
R: 3 meter radius
D: 2-12
PS: Solar power

These fist-sized gems were made to release their energy after being thrown. They caste forth laser light that encircles them. The light does damage to all within its circle. Once the charge has been expended, the gem must be subjected to 10 hours of sunlight before it is ready to produce another blast of destructive energy.

PRISM OF WONDER

R: 100 meters
PS: Solar power
DR: 10 minutes per 24 hour charge

The Prism of Wonder has a complex set of microcircuits placed within its facets. After it is charged, it is able to accomplish several different functions. It can create up to seven different moving images in holographic perfection. These images can be verbally programmed to do anything the prism user wishes once the first picture of them has been taken in by the optics of the system.

This imitation has proven highly useful in dealing with life forms that act aggressively towards the holder of The Prism of Wonder. The user can set up images that seem to attack, or otherwise look threatening. It can also be used as a light source in dark areas, but this effect is shortlived due to the nature of the image's power retention.

LIGHT PAINT

DR: Variable according to the paint's exposure to the sun

This substance is one of the few out-of-date creations of the technologists of Jward. It is a paint that is commonly found in many technological areas of the world. It absorbs light, and glows in its absence. It is highly useful to those that dwell both above and below ground.

It has become outdated because of the numerous types of lichen that now exist, both above and below ground that glow brightly at all times. These types of lichen can be found near any area of intense radiation.

BLADED SHIELD

WC: 2
R: Touch
D: 2-16

The bladed shield was designed to be both a defensive and offensive tool. At the center of the shield is some type of blade. The blade functions much the same as a normal sword, except that the weight of the individual is behind the force of the weapon.

The best of these devices are made out of duralloy, and can be instantly known by the triangular shape of the device. The shields not only act as physical defenses against attack, but they also block almost all of the known forms of energy attacks.

ACID EJECTOR

WC: 5
R: 30 meters
D: Variable from 1-10 to 6-60

The device is a simple pump with a glass lining. Acid is created by several different means, but only strong ones are ever used. The device has only three charges due to its great weight when filled.

HOLARATOR

R: 5 centimeters from the wearer
PS: Solar cells
DR: 30 minutes per 24 hour charge

This device uses the technology of holograms to generate one of two images in a 180 degree field in front of the user. Most of these generators are crystals that are able to set up images from any environment. Basically, the device can imitate the area around the holder and thus blank them out of view. Those in front of the holder will see the surrounding area imitated in the field of force in front of the device activator. The Holarator can also recreate the image of the last creature its optic system viewed. This causes the viewer to see an image of a standing creature of different proportions than the holder of the Holarator. Many holders try to store mutants of awesome power in their optics to be used to frighten away dangerous creatures.

When this device is activated, it also lowers the armor class of the holder by one because all those that try to strike the holder will be aiming at a false image.

There are several races of mutants that have been able to create these devices by using their mental mutations. These mutant crystals are just like their tech, but far more plentiful.

HOT LEAD THROWER

WC: 12
R: Variable
D: Variable plus 3-12 points of heat damage

While there are many different types of hot lead throwers, from cannon-sized ones to tiny derringer types, these have several things in common: a ceramic chamber where the shot sits for one second while it is flash heated, and a separate hydrogen energy cell in addition to the projection method of the ammunition for the heat generating process.

The unit is capable of heating the metal of the projectile to a high degree. This causes damage when it strikes, *and* gives the weapon greater range.

ANDRATOR

WC: 14
R: Touch
D: 4-48
PS: Solar power
DR: 5 activations per 10 hours of charging

The "Andrator" (believed to be a corruption of "anhydrator") appears to be a bowl with several dials and crystal tubes attached to the bottom. It was designed to be a simple unit for the drying and indentification of liquids of any type. Years after its creation, a race of intelligent insects discovered that if applied to the flesh of an enemy and activated, the unit would dry out portions of the blood vessels in the body. Andrators then became dangerous weapons in the hands of these creatures, who would set the unit to dry and analyze blood. When it strikes the skin, the device turns its rays on the still living flesh and causes it to die. Andrators cause terrible pain when used in combat and are indestructable, as are all of the powered Jward devices. The device is now seldom used for its original purpose.

LISTENERS

Listeners are simple fans that can be attached to the head near the ears, and are made of special fibers that collect the sound in the fans and pass it to the ears of the user. After intelligent races witnessed the principal of this unit, they started creating all sorts of imitations that were able to accomplish the same process at a slightly less efficient capacity.

While the device is ungainly, it is particularly useful in any sort of night action. With the aid of Listeners, slight footfalls can be detected up to 30 meters away.

SPIKE BIKE

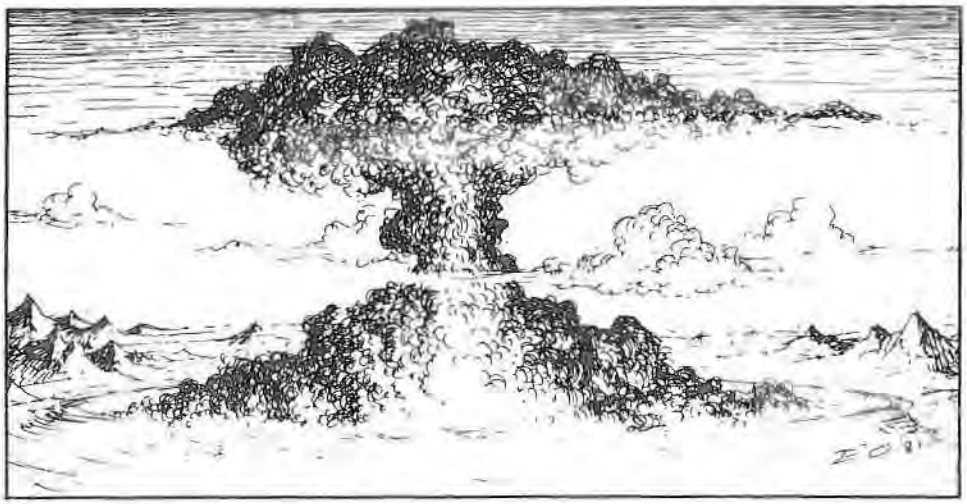
WC: 5
R: Touch
D: 3-18

The Spike Bike can be found wherever there are wheels made by the Ancients. The essential concepts behind the Bike are much the same as those of the Ancient's bicycle, except the Spike Bike has two more sets of gears. The extra gears control sword blades that move along two tracks on the frame of the bike. The user can choose to work these gears while peddling or standing still.

When the biker is moving, the blades cover a circular area around the biker on two levels. This allows the biker to escape, or at least move in another direction from the enemy, with his sides and rear partially protected.

When the operator is standing still, it is possible for him to use the blades to attack more than one enemy at a time. The bike is limited by the terrain, but has found its way to many of the larger plane areas where extremely strong mutants are able to easily control the unit through the tall grass.

That's it for now. Watch for more **Weapons of The Ancients** *in a future issue of The POLYHEDRON.*



PHANTASM! It's not there — or is it...? In this issue the topic is *phantasmal forces,* and the other general illusionary effects (or illusory, as it has basically the same definition). We're not talking about clerics at all, with the minor exception of the druidical spell *hallucinatory forest.* This is the realm of the magic-user and illusionist classes.

All spells of this type fall under the general category of Illusion/Phantasm (I/P), and range widely in power. The I/P spells for M-Us are *nystul's magic aura, ventriloquism, audible glamer, leomund's trap, mirror image, phantasmal force, fear, hallucinatory terrain, massmorph, simulacrum,* plus *invisibility* and variations thereon. For Illusionists, 32 of their 66 spells are of the I/P category, too numerous to list here.

Let's define our terms. An AD&D phantasm is a purely visual effect; an illusion is a complete version, with sound, smells, and so forth. Thus, whenever the ability to "create illusions" is mentioned (cf rakshasa, for one), it means the full-scale type. These definitions are implied by the AD&D™ game system as a whole.

The spell description for *phantasmal force* says that the illusion "will affect all believing creatures which view the *phantasmal force,* even to the extent of suffering damage from phantasmal missiles..." and continues, later, that it "can create the illusion of any object, or creature, or force..." Quite powerful, and what a can of worms we've opened up!

What are the limits to this? It seems, on the face of it, almost all-powerful, especially with the added sensations provided by the full illusions (you can always close your eyes and ignore a plain old phantasm). Well, DMs take note; these are procedures I've worked out over a period of years, and are things that everyone can live with, including the DM.

FIRST, every time an illusion is used, it results in a judgment call by the DM. Every use is in a different situation, with different creatures, of different things, and it's just plain impossible to give rules to cover everything. The DM's decision is FINAL — but *must* be consistent with previous rulings.

SECOND, if an illusion is used to duplicate an "attack spell" effect, it should have little or no effect! This also applies to most other spells, but the controversy is usually about the attack types. If there's another spell for the effect and you have to imitate it instead of using the original, you should be penalized heavily. (See hereafter for further discussion on this, in detail.)

THIRD, if there's anything odd about the illusion, allow saving throws for disbelief, and allot bonuses as you wish. Be fair, though; the contrary should apply: if the illusion is very normal or of an expected thing, you may completely disallow the attempt at disbelief.

FOURTH, a creature can either believe completely or disbelieve completely, and disbelieving uses a whole round of action. You *can't* have it halfway, or both ways. Furthermore, if a creature tries to disbelieve a real thing, the victim forfeits all saving throws to which he or she would normally be entitled. Disbelieving that real *fireball* gets you toasted, no saving throw!

Illusions are false realities. They should ideally be used to misdirect, misinform, scare, and so forth. The DM should discuss this grey area with the players in the campaign before opportunities arise for their use, so that everyone knows what they're getting into.

Illusory damage is real enough that a character can die from it, if believed. However, we must keep a firm grip on the "reality" of the game situation; the fighter who dies of illusory missile fire will *NOT* be covered with little holes, but will merely have died for no apparent reason, believing himself to be full of arrow holes.

This is important. If you can really die of illusory wounds, why can't you be really cured by illusory cures? Walk across an illusory bridge to get across an obstacle? Fly around on an illusory dragon?

It's all in the mind of the recipient. Even though you may, indeed, believe that you're cured, walking, or flying (in the cases above), your character is really standing there believing an illusion. Illusory cures last only as long as the illusion; when the caster's concentration lapses, away they go. Apply this general principle to phantasms in the game, and many pitfalls of logic can be avoided.

Now, on to a discussion of the four main guidelines listed above.

#1: The DM should be exceedingly careful to consider the long-range effects of any ruling he or she makes, especially so with illusions. Players who lose characters this way tend to have very long memories. Fairness is a basic element of good Dungeon Mastering, and consistency is another. So be sure to make the right ruling in the first place, and be consistent by holding to it.

#2: The illusionist spells *shadow magic* and *demi-shadow magic* are specifically designed to duplicate magic-user spell effects. It can be assumed that some audible effect accompanies many spell effects, and thus a *phantasmal force* will not duplicate them effectively. Consider also whether the victim would know the spell effect like the caster... how does an orc know of the effects of a *magic missile*? A phantasmal missle would merely be a scary effect, but would *not* necessarily be seen as a damage-causing attack! A magic-user opponent would be much more susceptible to that type of illusion

— but possibly so familiar that it could be easily distinguished from a real one!

As another guideline for phantasmal spell effects, consider the fact that the powerful fifth level illusionist spell *demi-shadow magic* gives a saving throw, and if the save is made, only 1 point of damage per level of the caster is inflicted. If the saving throw is failed, the effect is thereafter treated as a "normal" magic-user's spell: the *demi-shadow fireball* is then rolled as if a normal one (1d6/level), and a second saving throw is necessary to determine full or half damage inflicted. Even in games where the players are allowed to roll their own saving throws, the DM should make that first one to see if the *demi-shadow magic* is perceived as real.

If a 5th level spell has that little effect, I'd say that the lowly 3rd level *spectral force,* even if believed, would only do 1-2 points of damage per level of the caster when used to imitate an "attack spell" effect. Note that the magic user's *phantasmal force* is also 3rd level, and could be treated similarly.

This brings up another pertinent point. The Official details on magic-user vs. illusionist spells, even if of the same name, is that they are NOT in *ANY WAY* interchangeable. The magic-user taps spell power in one way; the illusionist uses another very different method. Thus, a magic-user CANNOT learn a *phantasmal force* spell from an illusionist's scroll or book; they're *not* the same spell.

One exception to these general rules is the mixing of illusory and "real" magic in the proper sequence. If a *fireball* explodes amidst an oncoming horde of goblins, killing many, an illusion of a *fireball* occurring shortly thereafter would almost certainly be believed as a "real" one, having similar effects.

#3: By staying very, very picky about the use of illusions, the DM can force players into careful and ingenuous uses. For a simple example, consider the creation of illusory reinforcements to a battle in a corridor. If they suddenly appear with the party, it looks suspicious; however, if they appear coming around a corner, they would seem more real. If they are of races and bear equipment similar to those in the party, that also contributes to the realism.

Similarly, if an illusory group of archers fires volleys of arrows that don't all hit —some bouncing off the opponents' armor, some going over their heads — this is quite realistic, and should have good chance of success (all else being equal).

Remember that no matter how realistic it gets, a successful disbelief attempt can ruin the whole thing.

#4: This simple rule keeps player characters from disbelieving at every turn, which could ruin some of your more effective traps. If they understand that it's all or nothing — that the attempt to disbelieve means, in effect, standing there brazenly refusing to believe your senses — they'll be quite careful about it. One real *fireball* attack in a dungeon full of illusions will straighten things out fast. The saving throw against a *fireball* implies a crouching posture, shielding the face, etc. —none of which must be stated; it's "just a saving throw" in the actual play. And standing there letting it hit requires courage, possibly misplaced. If it's a "real" attack (magical or otherwise), disbelief results in full damage. The term "full damage" merely means whatever was rolled (for that *fireball*, a weapon damage, etc.). I don't mean the maximum possible, just the maximum in that particular situation. But by disbelieving, the character is voluntarily forfeiting any saving throw, leaving the defenses down against incoming attack, and so forth.

When an illusion is touched, it is dispelled (with two exceptions; see below). A "touch" means the touch of a living creature, or clothing thereon. A sword or pole being used to touch the floor or wall ahead will NOT dispel hallucinatory terrain, for example, but the touch of a character's boot, glove, or whatnot will certainly do so. The two exceptions to this are (1) if the illusion is permanent, and (2) if it's being controlled at the time by the concentration of the spell caster. Thus, running up and touching the dragon attacking you is not a good idea, whether it's real or not, as (if it's an illusion) the caster can "cause it to react appropriately", as the spell description says.

Once a spell caster has chosen the effect or "topic" of the illusion, he or she can't change it around substantially. Some players argue that when it lasts as long as you can concentrate, then you should be able to change it at will — shooting illusory *fireballs* round after round, switching to arrow fire, and so forth. Again, this makes it too powerful; after you choose the illusion, you're stuck with it. You *are* permitted to cause it to react appropriately to stimuli, having the dragon roar when "hit" by real missile fire, look frosty after a *cone of cold* hits it, and so forth.

A word about illusionists and illusions: remember that this class is NOT familiar with magic-user spells. They cannot duplicate them without great risk of being disbelieved; they just don't know the precise effects that well. Far better to create illusory things common to ordinary experience — a pit, flames, collapsing corridor, reinforcements, and so forth.

Finally, a sticky one: when does a creature attempt to disbelieve? Sure, it gets a saving throw vs. spells when it tries, but — when does it try? Various methods have been proposed to standardize this call: roll intelligence or less on 3d6, and if so, try to disbelieve; disbelieve everything; don't disbelieve anything; disbelieve if it seems odd (a judgment call again); it's a real mess. The DM should, in my opinion, decide on each situation individually, asking several questions as summarized above: Could it be done better without magic, or with other magic? Is it realistic to the victim, imagining its state of mind, intelligence, experiences, and so forth? Is it therefore worth the attempt, considering a whole minute must be spent — does the victim want to take the chance? Could any bonuses or penalties to the saving throw be applied, considering all of the above? I've given as much as a +12 on the saving throw for disbelief, a cumulative effect of the situation, intelligence, and so forth.

These guidelines should help, but there are always specific questions, because every situation is different. DMs, be very careful with illusions, both yours and the players'; only certain ones are permanent, most can be ruined by disbelief, and all are potentially dangerous. Good luck! If you have questions, try and ask me during a Question & Answer session at a convention, or write if you must.

Next issue: miscellaneous notes on clerical spells, and some interesting applications.

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by The Game Wizards

Q: Can thieves wear studded leather armor?
A: NO, they can't. It makes them noisy, reflects more light than nice, dark leather, and just isn't done. And it's against Guild rules. You DON'T disobey the Guild if you want further training, value your life, and other minor details like that.

Q: Actual legends of dragons usually mention "the weak spot in the armor." Why isn't this in the game?
A: The AD&D™ game system does not allow for hit location, as it gets very detailed and slows the game considerably. Look through the Notes For the Dungeon Master article in this issue for more discussion of realism.

Q: Can a monk wear bracers of defense? Would they affect his armor class?
A: Technically, yes to both, but note that dexterity will not cause further adjustments.

However, consider the intent behind the creation of the class. These monks rely on their discipline totally, which in turn allows them to gain all those great abilities. (*Speak with animals* is very useful in controlling horses, for example.) I tell players of monks that the character wouldn't WANT to use bracers; it's contrary to the Monk Philosophy, putting faith in gadgets rather than self-control. Sure, it's technically allowed — but they won't WANT to. (The player might, but the character won't!)

Q: When a potential Bard switches from Fighter to Thief, does he still have the weapons of, and attack as, a Fighter?
A: NO. The whole purpose of learning the thiefly skills is to learn that there's more to life than beating things up —he's got to learn humility, and learn to sneak around. The character (and player) should make a serious attempt to stay in the background as a support person. Saving throws and hit points will stay the same, and those are based on the experience of the character, but weapons used, "to hit" scores, and so forth should be run as a thief.

Q: The biggest, nastiest creatures in the Monster Manual have hit points, not hit dice. How do you figure their saving throws, "to hit" rolls needed, level of spell casting ability, and so forth?
A: Divide the hit point by 4.5 (the average of 1d8) to determine their hit dice. This is then used to find all the details you need.

FIGHT IN THE SKIES™/DAWN PATROL™ Game Feature

AN ACE AGAINST ODDS: The Solitaire Scenario

by Mike Carr

INTRODUCTION

It is one of the last days of October, 1918. The German army is in retreat, and on the ground the Allied armies slowly grind out a daily advance. Above them, the Allied air forces range continually behind the German lines, pounding troops and back areas relentlessly.

An American formation of De Havilland DH-4 bombers, completing a high-level bombing raid deep behind the lines, turns for home with its task fulfilled. One machine, however, has developed an all too common problem: engine trouble. Quickly, its loss of power makes the lumbering bomber a straggler behind the formation — easy prey for the dreaded German interceptors. Rather than abandon the lone bomber to possible danger, two other machines from the squadron formation break off to form a protective V, and the grateful pilot of the ailing plane gives his protecting wingmen a thankful "thumbs up" sign.

Above, a German ace alone in his fighter surveys the situation. Staying hidden in the sun, he stalks the three enemy bombers and waits until just the right moment. Knowing he cannot waste too much time before the enemy can approach the Front (when he must break off his attack for fear of attracting enemy fighters), he weighs the odds. Then, without hesitation, he pushes in the stick and his plane hurtles downward toward the unsuspecting enemy. Keeping the sun behind him, he dives rapidly toward the hostile machines and pulls the charging handles of his twin Spandaus — feeling a dryness in his throat he has known many times before.

As the wind howls in his ears from the speed of the dive, the bomber he has chosen as his target begins to loom in the gun sights. He clasps the trigger mechanism, and at the right moment squeezes. Instantly, his guns begin to spit fire, and the solitary fighter shudders under their vibration. Like a hungry hawk, the German is upon his prey...

SPECIAL RULES & GUIDELINES

In this scenario, a single German player tackles a formation of American bombers, grouped together for mutual protection. Working against time, he must do his best to engage the enemy before he is forced to break off his attack. He will have his hands full coping with enemy defensive fire and such unforseeable hazards as gun jams. He must try to accomplish this objective with minimal damage to his own plane because of the shortage of materials and aircraft.

Because of the nature of the game, it is difficult to prescribe a hard-and-fast procedure for solitary play in this situation. However, the following guidelines and rules should be used, and any special matters (such as exact bomber formations that may vary) should be handled at the reasonable discretion of the player.

BOMBER MOVEMENT DIE ROLL TABLE

Roll	Red	White	Green
1	70 mph	Straight	-1000'
2	70 mph	Straight	-500'
3	80 mph	Turn	-200'
4	80 mph	Turn	no change
5	80 mph	Straight	no change
6	80 mph	Straight	+100'

To use this table, just take the combination of the three dice rolled to determine the movement of the bomber formation (not individual planes). Bombers always move toward the Allied lines and act defensively — moving only west or southwest. If a turn is called for, they will adjust accordingly.

1. The aircraft flown by the German pilot may vary, and he rolls to determine its type: 1 or 2 Fokker DVII (BMW), 3 Fokker D VIII, 4 Siemens-Schuckert D IV, 5 Roland D VIb, 6 Pfalz D XII.

2. The bomber formation starts heading due west, in a V formation as follows:

14,700' 14,800' 14,700'

Starting speed for the bombers is 80 mph.

3. On the first turn, the German player has a surprise attack (coming out of the sun). In doing so, he may make his choice of any attack (except head-on) upon any one of the three bombers without suffering defensive fire.

4. On following turns, the bomber formation moves according to dice rolls and tries to remain together for maximum protection. This is always prior to the German player's movement, and he has the option of attacking, if possible, after his move (as in a normal game).

5. The bombers remain together as long as possible, with one aircraft remaining 100' above the others for better defensive fire protection. The bomber crews realize protection is their best hope, and thus remain close to provide observers with possible defensive shots. A plane will not be abandoned unless it is slowed to less than 60 mph or shot down — if the speed of a plane is reduced, the formation will reduce its speed to the crippled plane's maximum. If one plane is separated from the formation by action, the remaining two will take a position of one ahead, one behind for best protection.

6. Bomber movement is determined by rolling three dice of different colors —red, white, and green. If a turn is called for, it will be executed as the first square moved to. When turning diagonally, the flank machines will take up the best defensive position. Additionally, if one bomber is badly hit, the formation may adjust to afford it the best defensive position — at the player's discretion. The German player will move the bombers according to the rolls, but his good judgment will be required in some instances (if, for example, a bomber was temporarily separated by something like an aileron jam, or the like).

7. If one bomber is shot down, there is a 1/3 chance it was the one with engine trouble originally. If so, the other two may increase their maximum speed and proceed without speed restrictions incurred by rolls. In the event of two bombers being downed, the remaining may try to save itself by diving full out to escape toward the lines (and 5% is added each turn to the percentage roll for the game ending).

— if the speed of a plane is reduced, the formation will reduce its speed to the crippled plane's maximum. If one plane is separated from the formation by action, the remaining two will take a position of one ahead, one behind, for best protection.

8. Before each turn, the German player rolls on a percentage table to determine if it will be the last turn of the game:

1st and 2nd turn	No roll
3rd and 4th turn	10%
5th and 6th turn	20%
7th and 11th turn	30%

The game automatically ends after turn 12, unless rolled earlier.

9. Since German pilots and aircraft are very precious at this time, the German player **must** break off the action if:
   a. his engine takes 3 or more hits, or any other part takes 5 or more hits, **or**
   b. he suffers a pilot wound, other than NE

10. The German player loses the game if:
   a. he takes any type of wound, other than NE, **or**
   b. his plane is shot down or its engine is out, **or**
   c. his aircraft takes more than 12hf without downing at least one DH-4

11. The German player wins if:
   a. he downs at least 2 DH-4's without being wounded (except NE) or shot down (or having engine knocked out), **or**
   b. he downs only one DH-4 without taking more than 12hf

Other situations will mean a draw.

12. The German player has ace advantages when shooting which are equivalent to those listed in the Pilot Experience Advanced Game rules for having more than 10 kills, as follows: up one table when shooting, and double 1-5 hits pilot and observer on wound chances. When shooting, the American pilots and observers will take any shot within range and will always fire short bursts. If one gun jams, they will elect to shoot rather than try to clear the jam, if a shot is available.

SOLITAIRE SCENARIO PLAYING AID SHEET

Turn Record (Roll **before** each new turn to determine if it is the last)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		10%	10%	20%	20%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	

Action Record

DH-4 #1 L: 40 R: 40 L: 10 R: 10

E: FF: RF: T: LW: CW: RW: CH:
Altitude:

DH-4 #2 L: 40 R: 40 L: 10 R: 10

E: FF: RF: T: LW: CW: RW: CH:
Altitude:

DH-4 #3 L: 40 R: 40 L: 10 R: 10

E: FF: RF: T: LW: CW: RW: CH:
Altitude:

German Aircraft:

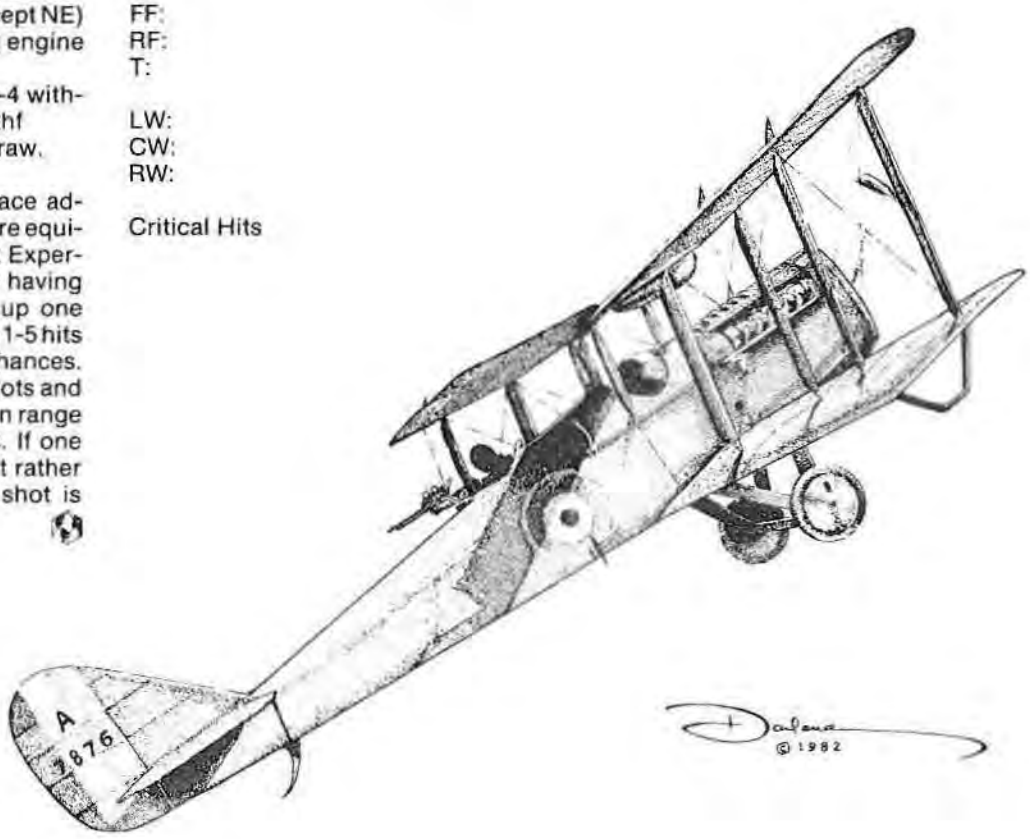
	Top	Turn	Climb	Altitude & Shooting Record
0-4,950				
5,000-9,950				
10,000-14,950				
15,000-up				

Dive _____ Ceiling _____

E:
FF:
RF:
T:

LW:
CW:
RW:

Critical Hits



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FIRST TOURNAMENT TIPS

by Errol Farstad

It started with a question (like anything else); "Why are there no *real* AD&D™ tournaments in Portland, Oregon?" By *real* tournaments, I mean the type sponsored by a club and put on at a college or some other large area. I had participated in a few small ones at local bookstores, but that didn't satisfy my hunger for bigger and better things, sooooo...I called TSR, who hooked me up with RPGA HQ, who, in turn, put me in touch with Frank Mentzer (surprise of surprises: the head man himself!), who then suggested what to have and do for a tournament. (Calling long-distance may be the next best thing to being there, but don't do it yourself unless you're serious, crazy, or rich, or all three, like me!). Thanks to Frank and his suggestions, our tournament turned out well, and more organized than the others I had been to.

Before doing *anything*, there are two key things to remember. The first is **organization**. You must be organized if you wish to keep from making a proverbial huge dragon out of a small lizard. The best way to do this is to write down everything you intend to do before putting your plans into action. I received many compliments for having a very organized tournament.

After establishing the above prerequisites, I wrote the following list:

1. Date and place to have the tournament
2. How many rounds
3. The adventures
4. Dungeon Masters
5. Prizes
6. Delegated Responsibility (who does what)
7. Public Relations
8. Costs

After writing the list, I immediately got in contact with some of the community colleges and universities in the area, as they usually offer the best prices in town compared to a hotel. When looking at places to hold a tournament, keep in mind one thing: the number of people you plan on having attend the tournament. We planned on about 60-100 people, so we reserved ten rooms (so the DMs could be alone with their group, heh,heh!). I found out in a hurry that it helps if your club is a non-profit organization; people are more apt to open their doors to you if your club is non-profit.

Determing the date was next on our agenda. Since this was our first tournament, we figured one day ought to be enough (HA!). We also figured four rounds in an eight-hour period would be fine. *But*, we ran into a small problem. We had to allow for such silly things as lunch breaks, so each round was (get this!) one hour and forty-five minutes long. So my advice is either have a two-day tournament or have less rounds. Our group felt that since we were having only a one-day tournament, eliminations would be pointless if we only had the awards recipients present. So we used what we call a "class-switch system." We used only the four basic character classes (Fighter, Magic-User, Cleric, and Thief). Each person stayed in the same room with the same group, but played each round as a different class of character. We used the following table:

	ROUND			
	1	2	3	4
1	FTR	M-U	CL	TH
2	M-U	CL	TH	FTR
3	CL	TH	FTR	M-U
4	TH	FTR	M-U	CL
5	M-U	FT	CL	TH
6	FTR	M-U	TH	CL

This system was well accepted by DMs and players alike since it gave everybody the chance to play a different type of character each round. For keeping score, we made the mistake of using the scoring system mentioned in DRAGON #49. We vowed next time to use the RPGA voting system. If anybody can figure out how to incorporate the class-switch system with the RPGA method, please let me know.

Getting DMs was something of a problem for us. It's usually best to work with DMs you know, but since we were a relatively new club when we started this tournament, we didn't have access to a lot of DMs. If you have the same problem we had, do what we did: test any person who is interested in being a DM with a written test on the basic AD&D™rules. It was successful for us, as it pretty much gave us an idea of who to pick and who not to. We also tried to keep the age of the DMs at least 16 years and older. The older, the better, I found out.

For adventures, you can be imaginative and create your own, but make sure to have at least a rough draft *before* you plan the tournament, or you'll have more gray hairs than you know what to do with! Or, you can do what we did and use the RPGA modules.

Prizes were next on our list of many things to do. Since our group is a non-profit organization, we were able to get most of our prizes *donated*. A major selling point was that prizes donated to non-profit groups are tax-deductible! Also, if you have connections with local businesses, and an honest face, you should be able to get the donations.

Delegating responsibility is *vital!* If you don't delegate responsibility to other people in your group, they'll lose interest, and you'll lose sleep (not to say that you don't anyway). Take it from someone who lost hit points due to lack of sleep because he didn't delegate responsibility!

You'll notice that I haven't said anything about Public Relations (PR) and cost. The basic reason is because I've saved the best for last. Without some sort of advertising (at least a month in advance), your tournament will be lucky enough to draw your immediate circle of friends. Where to advertise? DRAGON™ magazine (and magazines like it) is one place, and The POLYHEDRON is another. Local radio and television stations should offer some sort of free advertising to non-profit groups; local gameshops will be more than happy to advertise your tournament (especially if they donated the prizes). Our group used all the above except for the radio and television stations. I had delegated them to someone else, but it didn't get done (which proves you should do some things yourself after all!).

One of the biggest assets we had is that one of our members is a graphic artist by trade, so we were able to get the artwork for our posters done for free! Also, yours truly has some experience in lettering, so half of our battle in PR was won! The other half was getting our PR out in time. If you do that, you'll probably have a good tournament.

There is one last thing: costs. They're unavoidable. For our first tournament, copying cost was our biggest expense, even though we were able to keep it down to about $35.00. The reason it was so low is that we were able to get some of it done for free, and in some cases we only had to pay five to six cents a copy. We made award certificates ourselves, which really saved a lot of money. What would have cost about $18.00 for 25 copies ended up at about one-third that price.

The use of the facility was the most expensive item. If you can arrange to pay for the facility after the event, great! *We* had to pay in advance, so some of the members dug into their pockets for this. Fortunately, we were able to get a discount for the use of the college, so the cost was kept to under $100.

There's probably a ton of material that I've neglected to mention, but I think I covered the important points. If you have any questions, feel free to write to me at my club address: Errol Farstad, POB 16762, Portland, OR, 97216, and I'll try to answer as soon as possible. May you make your saving throws!

NORANDIR

1982

SENSING A DISTANT FRIEND IN NEED, GODSWIND AND NORANDIR WASTE NO TIME, DONNING NEW CLOTHES AND GEAR, THEY SEEK OUT TALATH'S HORSE MERCHANT, BUYING TWO OF THE FINEST STEEDS GOLD PIECES CAN ACQUIRE, THEY MOUNT AND HASTILY MAKE FOR THE EAST.

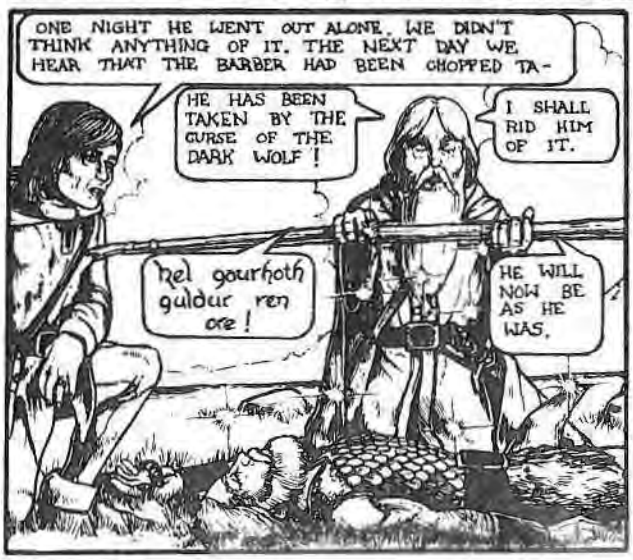
THREE DAYS ON THE ROAD BRING THEM TO THE IRON MOUNTAINS - THE EASTERMOST OF THE DWARVEN MINING DELVINGS. PAST THOSE SUMMITS THE ROAD TURNS TO BUT A WORN TRAIL.

A TRAIL WITH UNEXPECTED SURPRISES!

THE AMBUSHER, TAKING NORANDIR OFF GUARD, KNOCKS HIM TO THE GROUND. NORANDIR IN TURN THROWS HIS ASSAILANT AWAY IN ORDER TO DRAW HIS SWORD. BEFORE HIS BLADE IS HALF WAY OUT OF ITS SCABBARD, HE RETURNS IT. IN A BERSERK CRAZE, THE ATTACKER LUNGES FORTH, MEETING A STRONG, HARD MAILED FIST. HAVING HIS OPPONENT STUNNED, NORANDIR DELIVERS SEVERAL MORE CRUSHING BLOWS, RENDERING HIS ATTACKER UNCONCIOUS AND SOMEWHAT BRUISED.

HAVING TRACKED EVERHAL, THE ATTACKER, FOR THE PAST THIRTY-SIX HOURS, GLEOHORN AND TYRG ENTER TO FIND HIM KNOCKED OUT AT NORANDIRS FEET. A STRANGE COMING TOGETHER INDEED, SINCE ALL FIVE ARE OF THE SAME CAUSE, FRIENDS AND ALLIES. GREETINGS COMPLETE, GLEOHORN EXPLAINS EVERHAL'S APPARENT INSANITY.

IT BEGAN WHEN WE WERE ATTACKED BY A WEREWOLF. WE KILLED IT...
...BUT EVERHAL WAS BITTEN. A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER WE REACHED A VILLAGE. AND GOT A ROOM. EVERHAL WAS ACTING VERY STRANGE... VERY UNTRUSTING HE WAS.


ONE NIGHT HE WENT OUT ALONE. WE DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING OF IT. THE NEXT DAY WE HEAR THAT THE BARBER HAD BEEN CHOPPED TA-
HE HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE CURSE OF THE DARK WOLF!
I SHALL RID HIM OF IT.
hel gourhoth guldur ren ore!
HE WILL NOW BE AS HE WAS.

SO TELL ME GLEOHORN, WHERE ARE GORNDIL AND THE OTHERS? LAST I KNEW, YOU WERE WITH THEM.
WHEN WE TOOK OFF AFTER EVERHAL, HE WAS AT THE INN, IN THE VILLAGE OF WYPONG.
I CAN NOT SAY. HIS WOUNDS WERE DEEP. THE SCALES OF FATE COULD HAVE TIPPED EITHER WAY IN OUR ABSENCE.
THEN HE'S ALIVE!
THEN IT IS URGENT WE PRESS ON! FAREWELL.

CONTINUED